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THE
SLAVERY OF RUM.

BY
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THE
SLAVERY OF RUM.

IF the tongue is an unruly evil, a world of iniquity, and is set on fire of hell, verily the appetite for strong drink is an unruly evil, a world of iniquity, and is set on fire of hell. For the strongest bonds that bind men together, the bonds of matrimony, the ties of filial, parental, fraternal, and maternal love, are sundered by it, as flax before the fire. Under its frenzy, fathers have murdered their children, mothers have left their little ones to starve, brothers have "met in fell encounter," and sons have

stained their hands in the blood of those that begat them.

The snake-charmer can bring the venomous serpent under control ; the will of the elephant can be broken so that he will follow his leader whithersoever he goeth ; the lion, that thunders his mandate in the desert, can be brought under the mastery of his keeper ; but the appetite for strong drink cannot be charmed, its will cannot be broken, or brought under the yoke of a master. It cannot be bought with gold, or allured by fame, or melted with tears, or charmed with the tongue of eloquence. It cannot be turned back by the fear of shame, by the rod of justice, by the iron hand of the law, by the frowns of the good, by the sneers of the bad. Having got the mastery of its poor deluded slave, it drives him on through hunger and cold, through stripes and imprisonments, in perils among robbers, in perils in the city, in perils in the sea, and in perils among false friends and brethren. When once the appetite has brought into captivity every thought

and desire of beggar or banker, riches and honors, kingdoms and thrones, time and eternity, heaven and hell are all as gossamer threads to hold him back from the precipice. Like cattle in a burning shed who, instead of escaping from the flames, rush into the fire that is to consume them ; so the slave of appetite rushes into the fires that are to burn him down to the nethermost hell.

The appetite in the beginning, like the cubs of the tiger, can be controlled with little or no difficulty ; but wait a few months or a year, until the cubs have become tigers thirsting for blood, and there is no safety but the cage. The appetite at first is satisfied with claret and sangaree, but after a few months it calls louder and louder for gin and brandy. There may be trembles in the hands, and staggers in the feet, still the cry becomes more and more imperious. The hungry wolf, ravening for his prey, is but a faint emblem of the drunkard's appetite ravening for strong drink. The restraints that religion and law have thrown around him must go down. His

thirst, like an incoming tidal-wave, sweeps away the breakwater that virtue and piety had thrown up for his safety. Once he found the promises of God as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; now he turns to the refuge of lies. Once he could say, "Thy rod and thy staff comfort me;" now he returns for comfort to the beggarly elements of rum, gin, and brandy—elements that have brought ten thousand households to beggary and want; that have filled our poor-houses with paupers, and our prisons with criminals; that have given our young men to the mad-house, and our maidens to lust and shame.

Remorse is the hornet's nest in the soul, very quiet until disturbed by some besetting sin; then look out for the stings. Then men, in their agony, rush to the drink-house to sooth their pains in midnight revelry. Men drink because they have so much trouble. If my house should be on fire I should have trouble, but I would not pour kerosene on the flames. That would be the worst thing I could do. If one should find

himself going down the rapids above Niagara, and there was no other hope but in his two oars, he would be crazy to throw down his oars and pour liquid poison down his throat.

If you are pinched by poverty, then stop spending your money for that which is not bread. If your clothes are on fire, don't rush into a powder-house or a drink-house. If assailed by trouble, don't call to your aid the rum-demon; for he will darken your understanding, ossify your heart, put trembles in your hands, staggers in your feet, rags on your back, and madness in your brain.

The great captain displays his force and tact when the wavering lines make victory doubtful. If, with God and the eternal weight of glory on one side, and rum, rags, and hell on the other, your will is wavering, then strike for manhood, for liberty, and independence. If you are hungry, don't rush in among ravening wolves. If you are friendless, don't go to the drink-hells for sympathy. If you are sad, keep away from the sharks on the land and in the sea.

Millions are borne round and round in the eddies of the rum maelstrom, whose vortex draws down, every year, two hundred thousand deluded mortals, who started with the wine-cup in hand, thinking they could at any moment break the charm and escape the draw of the deepening eddies. When men take hold of the cup of trembling they lose health, wealth, friends, and a good name; but their great loss, and the most difficult to recover, is their will-power. They cannot understand that every indulgence, every yielding to temptation, is weakening the will and destroying their power of self-control.

The ship may be dismasted and the quarter-deck swept away, but if the rudder chains hold good there is hope of bringing her in safety to the "haven where they would be." Man, assailed by poverty, tossed on the waves of adversity, and broken by misfortune, if the rudder-bands of the will hold good, will out-ride the storm, and come to the port of peace and safety.

In the commonwealth of the soul the will executes and enforces the mandates of the party in power. If the Law-and-Order party have control, then the will enforces ordinances that bring peace and plenty; but if Lust of the Flesh is in power, then the will is compelled to execute laws that bring want and shame. If one goes into battle and fear gets control of the will, he will run away; but if courage has the mastery, he will fight it out to the bitter end. In the case of the robber, the liar, and the blasphemer, there may come a change; but for the poor slave of the cup there is but faint hope that he will shake off his chains and strike for liberty. Charles the Twelfth and John Howard were men of an iron will. In one, Lust of Dominion controlled the will; in the other, Love of Humanity. The same force, the same iron will, that carried Alexander on from conquest to conquest, carried on the great apostle to the Gentiles, over seas and continents, to recover kingdoms and thrones to the obedience of Him whose right it is to reign.

When Lust of the Flesh is in power in the commonwealth of the soul, all who hold official rank under the sway of the Law-and-Order party are put out. Humility vacates the tribunal, and Pride of Life holds the scales of justice. Honesty surrenders the portfolio to Hypocrisy. Truth hands over the keys of the treasury to Avarice. Mercy and Patience and Charity retire from the cabinet, and Envy and Hate and Spite and Revenge are sworn in. And there is "a sound of revelry by night." And although the mighty are fallen, "truth crushed to earth shall rise again." The truth and the life shall suddenly come into his temple and drive out the usurpers, and reinstate Truth and Justice, Fidelity and Purity. He alone can keep the city and the watchmen thereof. He alone can build the city and the builders thereof. But before he can enter and abide in the soul the legion of unclean spirits must be driven out. The greedy-devil and the rum-devil must be served with a notice to be gone, and gone forever. Every valley must

be exalted, and every mountain of vanity brought low, before the sounding of the trumpet: Behold thy King cometh! The Pontine marshes of Lust must be dried up before He will be in us a well of water springing up unto eternal life. The flag of rebellion must be struck down before He will spread his banner of love over us. The cup of trembling must be dashed from the lips before men can take the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. Not until we forsake the flesh-pots of sin will he give manna from heaven. Not until we forsake Egypt and venture out into the wilderness will the pillar of glory rest upon our tabernacle. Men who build distilleries that they may "rethunder hell" and blow sulphurous flames over land and over sea, can have no hope that the angel of mercy will touch their hearts and lips with a live coal from the altar of heaven.

It might be possible for one to go into a den of rattlesnakes and escape the poisoned fang, or one might put his head into a lion's mouth and not be killed; but there is no hope

if he takes the adder into his mouth. If we go to the jail, the prison, the poor-house, or stand before the gallows, and ask, "Is the word of God true?" the response would come back in thunder-peals, "If we sow the wind we shall reap the whirlwind."

Let every poor wretched slave of the rum-appetite determine that he will be free, and then, by God's help, let him break the dreadful chains which bind him. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." John viii, 36.

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